Government. Chairman, Cochin Port Trust took up the matter with State Government and with their help the activity of illegal extortion has been curbed to a large extent. Besides, Cochin Port has also initiated measures to control the illegal activities by ensuring open and transparent system of labour booking and hiring of trailers and trucks. The labour bookings are now made through the Kerala headload Workers Welfare Board, an organization run by the Labour Department of Government of Kerala.

PF of seamen

1121. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the strong resentment prevailing among the foreign going seafarers about non-reimbursement of Rs. 100 crores of PF default by the office of the Director General of Shipping;

(b) if so, the status of Government decision to reimburse the money so that seamen get the required PF amount in time;

(c) whether Government are enquiring into the reason for the inordinate delay in taking decision in the matter and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) The Government has taken a decision to recoup the entire loss of Rs. 92.78 crores of the Seamen's Provident Fund in order to protect the interests of the seafarers.

Deceleration in growth of road insfrastructure

1122. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether road sector projects are proving to be speed-breakers along the infrastructure highway, with the sector being the poorest performer among all sectors during 2006;

(b) if so, whether road sector's growth decelerated by a striing 37% during first quarter of this fiscal;

(c) whether this sector grew by 9.4% in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal; and

(d) if so, the main reasons for decline in road sector and the steps Government propose to take to improve the position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) The progress of the works on development of National Highways may not be considered as speed breaker for the growth in other sectors of infrastructure as there are indications of positive growth in their sectors.

(b) and (c) Deceleration of growth by 37% in the frist quarter of 2006-07 as mentioned has been calculated on the basis of the percentage decrease of aggregate length of road improved, irrespective of type of works, over the aggregate length improved during the correponding period of the preceding year. This method may not be appropriate as programme of works changes from year to year. The figures mentioned do not depict the actual status of progress of work done. During the period of april to June, 2006 four-laning of 152 km. of National Highways along with other works like two laning, strengthening of existing National Highways etc. were completed and works of four laning in 598 kms. were awareded. During the first quarter of the year, 94% of the target in respect of roads was achieved. This aspect has not been considered while considering the progress of the work.

(d) The main reasons for the delay in implementation of work are the problems associated with acquisition of land, shifting of utilities, delay in forest clearance, poor peformance of some contractors, delay in clearances for railway overbridges (ROBs), very heavy and continuous rainfall and extreme in some parts of the country, and law & order and insurgency problems in some States.

Regular monitoring of financial and physical progress of works is carried out with a view to removing bottlenecks. Quarterly review meetings are being held with the officers of the State Government for monitoring as well as removal of bottlenecks. In addition, the following steps are also being taken by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to expedite the

implementation of National Highway Development Project:

(i) The Contracts are regularly monitored at various levels such as by Supervision Consultants, Project Directors, Senior Officers of NHAI. Progress reviews are also held at the level of Chairman, NHAI, Secretary, Department of Road Transport and Highways and Minister, Shipping Road Transport and Highways.

(ii) State Governments have appointed senior officers as nodal officers for resolving state related problems associated with implementation of the National Highways Development Project.

(iii) A Committee of Secretaries has been constituted to address inter-ministerial and Central-States issues which impede the progress of the work.

(iv) This Ministry has been authorized to issue notification for acquisition of land for National Highways without referring to the Ministry of Law.

(v) To expedite the construction of railway overbridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to coordinate with Ministry of Railways.

(vi) Punitive actions have been taken against non-peforming contractors.

(vii) Steps have been taken to improve cash flow problems of constractors by granting financial assistance.

Construction work on NH-57 in Bihar

†1123. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY:
SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the pace of the construction work on NH-57 including construction of section between Muzaffarpur and Fulparas under East-West corridor of National Highways Development Project in Bihar is very slow;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi